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ABSTRACT

Rapidly changing demographics are forcing more and more Americans to interact with people who are different from themselves. Americans must become more sensitive to cultural diversity. One way to address this challenge at the university level is to offer courses in intercultural communication. At one university, an upper level course in intercultural communication is offered which meets the university requirement in cultural diversity. After an introductory examination of terms and concepts, the first half of the course addresses the international dimension, looking at African, Middle Eastern, and South American cultures, both generally and in specific cultures or countries. The second half of the course is devoted to intercultural communication within a country, using as a starting point the situation of French and English speakers in Canada, followed by an examination of the primary non-Caucasian cultures in the United States. Throughout the course certain core aspects are covered, including cultural factors (attitudes, beliefs, values, stereotypes, and prejudices), verbal communication or language factors (translation problems, denotative and connotative meaning, and linguistic relativity), and nonverbal communication factors (such as gestures and facial expression). Instruction is carried out using both the lecture-discussion method and experiential learning activities in the form of case studies, simulation, exercises, and a field study project. (The course syllabus, 35 references, and copies of two cartoons dealing with American Indian issues, are attached.) (SR)

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AN EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH TO AN UPPER DIVISION COURSE IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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CULTURAL DIVERSITY: AN OVERVIEW

Intercultural communication experts predict that more and more face-to-face contact between people with very different cultural backgrounds will occur (Klopf, 1987, p. 3).

Today blacks, Asians, and Hispanics make up 21% of the American population. More than 30% of New York City's residents are foreign born. Miami is two-thirds Hispanic. Detroit is 63% black. San Francisco is one-third Asian. In ten years, minorities will make up 25% of the population of the United States. English will be the second language for the majority of California's population by the year 2,000; by 2020, the majority of that state's entry level workers will be Hispanics. Sometime in the next century, whites will become the minority in the population of the United States. Diversity will have a profound impact on our lives and will pose a growing challenge (Copeland, 1988, p. 52).

Two-thirds of all global migration is into the United States. Now most immigrants are from very different cultures - predominantly Asian and South American - and they are not blending so readily into the mainstream of American life. Rapidly changing demographics are forcing more and more Americans to interact with people different from themselves - people who they do not understand and who have unique ways of doing things (Copeland, 1988, p. 52).

Millions of tourists annually visit the United States and millions of Americans travel overseas. With the dramatic changes in the political climate of eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union, there will be even greater opportunity for travel resulting in even more people having contact with different cultures.

DIVERSITY IN THE ACADEMIC SETTING

During the past decades, colleges and universities in the United States have become a favored locale for international students. In 1987-88, 356,200 non-American students were enrolled in 2,518 U.S. colleges and universities. Of these, 83.4 percent came from the Third World countries of Southeast Asia (50.7 percent), the Middle East (12.2 percent), Latin America (12.5 percent), and Africa (8.0 percent) and they have had to make more substantial adjustments to the academic and cultural life in the United States than have their counterparts from Europe (Kai Kai, 1989, p. 123).

Not only does contact between American and these non-Americans on campus manifest itself in social interactions between students and students and faculty but also in intercultural interactions in the learning process as well. It is widely recognized that they are potential differences between American and non-American students in how they learn. Kai Kai (1989, p. 123) observes that the non-Western student is depicted as conservative, conforming, and non-questioning. The Western student, on the other hand, is portrayed as liberal, individualistic, and curious. Of course, there are individual exceptions and variations in these categories. Cultural factors impact learning for most foreign students. To the non-Western student,

achievement in education is the key to status and wealth in society; whereas the Western student views education as one of a multitude of ways to achieve the same results. There are differences in performance expectations and reactions of the non-Western student vis-a-vis the Western student. Whereas the responsibility for succeeding is shared in the West by the student and the instructor, the onus of responsibility for doing well rests solely on the foreign student.

RANGE OF INTERCULTURAL DIFFICULTIES

It is obvious there is high potential for difficulties in intercultural communication in light of the circumstances outlined above. Unfortunately, there are instances when these difficulties are characterized as more than simply misunderstandings in communication. Even more alarming is that there is evidence that these instances are increasing in number. Racial and ethnic incidents occur which can and have taken on an ugly form.

One study reported thirty eight racial incidents at predominantly white institutions of higher learning from 1986 through 1988. Most of these incidents did not occur in the South but rather in the North at many of the most prestigious universities in the country, including Big Ten and Ivy League schools. Four different universities in Wisconsin, both public and private, were cited for five of the thirty eight incidents. The incidents in Wisconsin were characterized by such behaviors as black face parties, slave auctions, black face skits, racist flyers, racist newspaper cartoons, and physical beatings. The majority of the incidents nationally were directed at Blacks, but Hispanics, Asians, American Indians, Jews, and women were also targets (Farrell & Cloyzell, 1988, p. 216).

A report released in April (1990) by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in conjunction with the American Council on Education showed one out of four colleges considered racial tensions a significant problem on their campuses (Kelly, 1990).

In recent years there were clashes between Indians and non-Indians in Wisconsin over the Treaty Rights issue. Interactions between the Indian and non-Indian cultures occurred in protest marches, verbal remarks and speeches, placards and posters, and even in promoting a brand of beer. Among these forms of communication were those which were described as, at the very least, racially insensitive, and others labeled outright racist. For example, television coverage revealed people carrying signs reading, "Tommy, our Timber is for Timber Wolves, not Timber Niggers", and "Spear a Pregnant Squaw, Save Two Walleye". See the Milwaukee Journal cartoons on the next two pages characterizing these incidents.

Another incident in Wisconsin occurred in March 1990 when it was confirmed that police officers in a city near Milwaukee had held Martin Luther King parties in 1988 and 1989 with racist themes. Pictures on lynchings were shown, Klu Klux Klan materials displayed, watermelon was served spiked with Confederate flags, and individuals made up with black faces (Nichols, 1990, p. 1A). These are just a few of many examples which could be cited illustrating the extent to which racial

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Other Views

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SPEAR AN INDIAN - SAVE A WALLEYE!
GOD BLESS OUR PARR
STA FOREVER
SPEARFISHING SEASON OPENS
"LOOK! THERE'S HAROLD — THIRD BIGOT FROM THE RIGHT!!"

HARRY AND WALLY NEVER MISS THE SEASON'S OPENER!
SAVE A WALLEYE SPEAR AN INDIAN
THE ONLY GOOD INJUN IS A
THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL

and ethnic intercultural conflicts can develop.

Whether it be in the form of communication with persons from other countries or in the form of interactions with different cultures living in the United States, there is a widespread belief that Americans need to be more understanding and sensitive to cultural diversity. Clearly there is no one way to address this challenge. One means, however, on the university level is to offer courses in intercultural communication. Kai Kai (1989, p. 125) argues this point by asserting that a course in intercultural awareness should be developed and made a part of the general college/university requirements.

BACKGROUND OF THE COURSE

The purpose of this paper is to describe one approach to such a course. It is an upper division course in intercultural communication which can be chosen from an array of several other courses to meet the University requirement in cultural diversity. Students in the course are primarily seniors with some juniors and graduate students. The course enrolls 30 students per section and meets for 75 minutes twice a week for a semester. To meet the guidelines for cultural diversity a course must have a primary focus on cultures other than the traditional Western or European (African, Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American). There must be significant coverage of African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American, American Indian cultures in the United States. One or more of the following themes must be emphasized: a) discrimination against ethnic and racial groups, b) cultural and historical experiences of ethnic and racial groups, and c) discrimination, cultural differences, and ethnicity in other settings which increase the understanding of cultural and ethnic problems.

COURSE TOPICS

At this point in the paper, major characteristics of the course will be explained. A complete syllabus for the course can be found at the end of the paper. The course begins with an examination of terms and concepts with particular attention to "culture', "communication", and "intercultural communication". A discussion of Flack's analysis of geographical and role societies and Stewart's five dimensions of culture serve as introductory background material for the subject matter of the course.

The first half of the course addresses the international dimension looking at African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and South American cultures. For each of these topic areas, initially communication and cultural factors somewhat characteristic of the area as a whole is covered. This is followed by attention to factors more specific to selected focus cultures. For example, under Africa, Zaire is selected to give insight into the nature of culture and communication when a country goes through the early stages of independence. Nigeria is employed as an example of a country when established and cultural and how culture and communication operates in the 1990's. Under Asia, Japan is highlighted to reflect the characteristics of an industrial power in Asia while Thailand illustrates a culture considerably less industrialized. In the Middle East, the focus cultures selected are

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determined by current events during the semester the course is being offered. In Latin America, Mexico, the culture with the closest contact with the United States and Colombia (primarily due to Gorden's comprehensive book, **American Guests in Colombian Homes**) are the choices for emphasis. The final topic area in the first half of the course looks at the culture and communication of international organizations, namely the United Nations, and also examines subjects pertinent to all cultures. These include Glenn's case-particularism, universalism, relationalism and the factor of cultural shock.

The second half of the course is devoted to intercultural communication within a country. As a starting point, attention is directed outside the United States toward the situation of the French and English speaking Canadians. This is followed by an examination of the primary non-Caucasian cultures in the United States, African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American, and Native American. More specifically, under the Hispanic -Americans, the misunderstandings resulting from grouping all Hispanics as being the same are stressed. Under the Native-Americans, the focus cultures are the Navaho, the largest Indian tribe, and the Winneabago, a tribe in the State of Wisconsin. Due to the Treaty Rights issue in Wisconsin, the Chippewa culture is highlighted.

A final topic area in the course touches on "other" cultural groups such as the disabled, aged, gender, occupational, and regional.

APPROACH TO THE TOPICS

Throughout the entire course certain core aspects are covered as each culture is compared and contrasted with the United States. These include cultural factors such as attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions, stereotypes, and prejudice. Secondly, there are verbal communication or language factors such as translation problems, denotative and connotative meaning, and the concept of linguistic relativity. Thirdly, there are nonverbal communication factors such as gestures, facial expression, eye behavior, space, touch, clothing, time, and vocal cues.

COURSE METHODS

While the course contains the lecture-discussion method, student participation in case studies, simulations, and exercises play a major role in the learning process. Examples of this student participation are such experiential activities as:

- "Communication in a University Environment" (Japan).
- "The Girl and the River" (Thailand).
- "Your Hong Kong I. Q." (Hong Kong).
- "Bullfighting and Fishing" (Mexico).
- "Your American/Wisconsin Indian I. Q."
- "Your Chicano I. Q."

The major class project involves a choice of a library research paper or a field study paper in which the student focuses in depth on a particular culture. Due to its experiential nature, strong encouragement is given for students to select the field study project.

This project directs the students to conduct several interviews with someone from another culture who has had little direct exposure to American culture. The objective of the interview experience is not only to secure information about the other culture or to assess the feelings of the other person but also to reflect on the actual communication taking place in the interviews. Regardless of the choice of class project, each student orally presents the key elements and conclusions of the paper to the entire class during the final three weeks of the semester.

Several films are presented which generate class discussion. From the Going International Series by Copeland and Griggs Productions, "Bridging the Culture Gap" and "Managing the Overseas Assignment" have been found to be helpful. From the Valuing Diversity Series, "Communicating Across Cultures" and "Managing Differences" are effective to emphasize basic concepts of intercultural communication.

There are two short answer exams consisting of ten to twelve questions which call for a response of a sentence or two or at most a short paragraph. A final comprehensive exam is in the nature of two to three broad application questions given to the students to study outside of class the week before the end of the semester, The instructor selects one of the questions at the time of the exam and the student writes the exam entirely in class with no references to notes or other materials.

The text for the course is Samovar and Porter's **Intercultural Communication: A Reader**, 1991 edition, published by Wadsworth. In addition, there are a half a dozen books on library reserve. The text, being a book of readings, goes beyond the elementary subject matter in the field and is thus more pertinent to an upper division course.

CONCLUSION

It seems apparent that people in all walks of life will be faced more and more with the need to communicate with persons from other cultures. It appears also apparent that many individuals are woefully unprepared in knowledge and experience with other cultures to meet such circumstances effectively. Colleges and universities have not only the opportunity but the responsibility to offer intercultural courses.

The course described in this paper has been offered for twenty four consecutive years by the author enabling him to modify and refine both the content and method. The approach in this intercultural communication course addresses both the non-Western cultures in the international arena and major non-Caucasian cultures in the United States. Experiential learning activities in the form of case studies, simulation, and exercises have been found to be valuable learning tools. The experiential approach is highlighted by a project which encourages students to have an interview experience with someone from a different culture as a capstone to the course. A course structured in this manner does appear to have a positive impact in starting students on the road to becoming more effective in communicating with other cultures.

666 424/624 Cross Cultural Communication
FALL 1991-92 Syllabus

Dr. Ostermeier
Heide 461
472-5063

"The most observable differences between cultures are speech, dress, living habits, politics, and religion. But each culture is like a gigantic iceberg, carrying along beneath the surface of its observable differences its own assumptions, premises, and biases." Harry Maynard

Course Content
This course is concerned with Cultural Diversity and the problems of understanding and expression which occur when persons are in face-to-face communication with others from a different culture. Situations are studied both within the United States (primarily between middle-class whites and minorities such as African Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians) and between Americans and persons from cultural groups outside the United States. Factors such as attitudes, beliefs, language, nonverbal behavior, perception, prejudice, and stereotyping are examined as they affect intercultural communication. Problems encountered in business, mass media, school settings, and interpersonal situations will be emphasized in discussions, case studies, and exercises. This course will satisfy the Wisconsin DPI requirement in human relations for teachers as well as the UWW Diversity requirement.

Text
Samovar, L., & Porter, R. (1988). Intercultural Communication : A Reader. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 6th Edition, 1991.

Books on Reserve (2 hour loan)
Condon. Good Neighbors: Communicating with the Mexicans. 1985. (xerox copies).
Doob. Communication in Africa.
Gorden. Living in Latin America: A Case Study of Cross Cultural.
Kochman. Rappin' and Stylin' Out.
Oliver. Culture and Communication.
Samovar. Intercultural Communication: A Reader. 5th Edition.
Stewart. American Culture Patterns: Concepts and Perspectives.

Topics
BACKGROUND: TERMS AND CONCEPTS

1. Meanings of culture - Flack's geographical and role societies; meanings of communication; the cross cultural communication problem (Stewart's dimensions of a culture).

CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.

2. Communicating with Africans.
   a. Overview - Doob's Twelve Critical Variables.
   b. Focus cultures - Zaire (Republic of the Congo) (1960's); Nigeria (late 1980's, early 1990's).
   c. Other cultures illustrated - * Kenya.

3. Communicating with Asians.
   a. Focus culture - Japan (communication patterns of college students, social norms and interpersonal relations, Nishiyama - vertical communication, Osgood's connotative meaning).
   b. Other cultures illustrated - Thailand (Thai innovations in communication; Thai exercise "The Girl and the River"), * Viet Nam and Hong Kong (social interactions).

*As time permits.

4. Communicating with India.
   a. Focus on effects of Hinduism on communication.

5. Communicating with the Arabs.
   a. Cultural patterns of the Arabs.
   b. Western image of the Arabs.
   c. Significance and effects of Arabic language.
   d. Distinctive nonverbal behaviors.

6. Communicating with Latin Americans.
   a. Focus culture - Mexico (Lado's concepts of form, distribution, and complex of meanings).
   b. Focus culture - Colombia (Gorden's American Guests in Colombian Homes).

7. Communicating Internationally in General.
   a. Focus - United Nations (Prosser's communication characteristics, Oliver's elements of international speech; Glenn's universalism, relationalism, case-particularism).
   b. Cultural Shock Curve.
   c. Nonverbal communication across cultures.

CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS WITHIN A COUNTRY.

8. Communication between French and English speaking Canadians.
   a. Vocal stereotyping.
   b. Bilingualism - effect on attitudes and understanding.
   c. Word association and communication effectiveness.

9. Communicating with rican Americans (Black Americans).
   a. Stereotyping based on skin color, vocal, nonverbal cues.
   b. Nature and impact of "racism".
   c. The "Black English" controversy.
   d. Other aspects of language affecting communication.

10. Communicating with American Indians (Native Americans).
    a. Your American and Wisconsin Indian I.Q. (exercise).
    b. American Indian Myths.
    c. Factors affecting communication with American Indians.
    d. Focus cultures: Navaho, Native Alaskan, Winneabago.

11. Communicating with Hispanic Americans.
    a. Your Chicano I.Q. (exercise).
    b. The significance of Hispanics in the U.S.
    c. Cultural factors, stereotyping, personal contact.
    d. Focus cultures: Mexican-American, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans.

12. Communicating with Individuals in Other Roles.
    a. The aged, disabled, gender.
    b. Occupational, regional, life style "languages."

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GOALS, PROCEDURES, EVALUATION

Goals

1. To identify and understand:
   a. the major concepts and principles of interracial, interethnic, intercultural, and international communication.
   b. the communication aspects of such concepts as ethnocentrism, prejudice, discrimination, stereotypes, perception, and linguistic paralinguistic-nonverbal interaction.
   c. the communication problems encountered in such situations as:
      1) students studying in a foreign country, peace corps workers, tourists, and individuals in international business or involved in international organizations (as diplomacy).
      2) interactions between individuals from the "majority" culture and from minority cultures within the United States.
2. To gain an appreciation for the difficulties of cross cultural communication through in-class exercises and case studies and out-of-class observation and field experience.

Course Procedures

1. Informal lectures, discussions.
2. Participation in and/or study of actual and hypothetical cross cultural communication case studies and simulation exercises.
3. Opportunity to incorporate field experience activities and/or a library project.

Course Evaluation

Undergraduate		Graduate Students
15%	Exam 1	10%
15%	Exam 2	10%
20%	Final Exam	20%
15%	Project-Paper	15%
10%	Oral Presentation	10%
15%	Class Exercises	10%
10%	Discussion	10%
X	Article Evaluation	15%

Individual Study Project-Paper

Each student will select one of the following as the basis for a project to be completed during the semester: 1) engage in field study or 2) undertake library study. For a field study, the student will actually observe selected variables which affect cross cultural communication in an on-going situation. For study in the library, the student will compile a bibliography and gather information by surveying selected readings concerning a particular factor (s) in cross cultural communication. In either case, each student will formulate his/her material into a written paper and then adapt it for an oral presentation followed by a brief period for questions and/or class discussion. Oral presentations will be given during the last part of the semester.

Graduate Student Project

Each graduate student will write a descriptive-evaluative paper (4 pages) on an article from an academic journal. The article will be selected by the student from a list of articles furnished by the instructor.

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